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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MARK R. WARNER, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

God, You created us in Your image and gave us a conscience to enable us to realize our accountability to You. Help the Members of this body to be responsible stewards of their influence and opportunities. May they not miss opportunities to join You in Your liberation thrust in our world, persevering in the right as You give them the light to see it. Empower them to be true to You and true to themselves, even though they must travel on the road of pain and sacrifice. Strengthen them to work today with the confidence that You are with them.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARK R. WARNER led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 4, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MARK R. WARNER, a

Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WARNER thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following any leader remarks, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

As a reminder, cloture was filed on S. 23, the America Invents Act. The filing deadline for first-degree amendments is 1 p.m. today, Friday, March 4.

There will be no rollcall votes today. We should expect at least three rollcall votes at 5:30 p.m., on Monday, March 7. The first two votes will be on the confirmation of judges and the third vote will be on the motion to invoke cloture on S. 23, the patent bill.

Would the Chair announce morning business.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

CHANGING THE STATUS QUO

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, earlier this week, Republicans showed we can change the status quo in Washington.

The American people have made their position quite clear: Reverse the reckless spending and out-of-control expansion of government that Democrats have presided over during the past 2 years; stop growing government so Americans can grow the economy and the jobs that come along with that. Republicans made a small first step in that direction.

Democrats have taken a different approach to these concerns. They have sat on the sidelines hoping the public's concerns would pass or hoping that if they made enough of a stink over small cuts, they would seem bigger than they are. In other words, the Democrats' whole approach is to see what they can get away with rather than to actually do something about the debt and jobs crises Americans want us to address.

The White House proposal yesterday is equally unserious.

House Republicans have proposed a plan that would reduce spending by \$61 billion in this year's budget. Earlier this week, we voted on a 2-week piece of that bill that reduces spending by \$4 billion.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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